

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-06

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NSC-07 NSCE-00 CIAE-00 INR-10

NSAE-00 RSC-01 PM-03 SP-01 PRS-01 IO-03 L-02 SAB-01

DODE-00 DRC-01 /051 W

----- 092908

R 201500Z MAY 74

FM AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5584

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L JERUSALEM 00994

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, JO, IS

SUBJ: PALESTINIAN REPRESENTATION: CURRENT WEST BANK ATTITUDES

REF: JERUSALEM 474

1. SUMMARY: INCREASING POSSIBILITY OF ISRAELI-SYRIAN DISENGAGEMENT RAISES QUESTION OF WHAT NEXT. WHILE SOME WEST BANKERS XPECT THEY WILL BE NEXT, OTHERS SEEM TO PREFER FURTHER DELAY. IT IS REALIZED THAT IF SETTLEMENT EFOORTS NOW TURN TO WEST BANK, PALESTINIAN REPRESENTATION QUESTION BECOMES ACUTE. IF PLO CONTINUES NEGATIVE STANCE, HUSSEIN WOULD BE ONLY AVAILABLE NEGOTIATOR TO BRING END TO ISRAELI OCCUPATION. IF PLO TAKES POSTIVE TURN, ARABS HAVE SOME SORTING OUT TO DO. END SUMMARY

2. AS POSSIBILITY OF SYRIAN-ISRAELI DISENGAGEMENT HAS BECOME INCREASINGLY REAL, QUESTION HAS INEVITABLY ARISEN-WHAT NEXT? SOME WEST BANKERS SEEM TO EXPECT THEY WILL BE NEXT. ARABIC DAILY EL QUDS SAYS MAY 19 THAT GOLAN DISENGAGEMENT SHOULD LEAD TO SIMILAR DISENGAGEMENT ON JORDANIAN FRONT. WE DO NOT SENSE REAL IMPATIENCE TO GET AHEAD WITH IT, HOWEVER. OTHERS SEEM ACTUALLY TO PREFER FURTHER DELAY, PRIMARILY, WE GATHER, TO ALLOW
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MORE TIME FOR SORTING OUT PALESTINIAN ISSUES IN FASHION MORE

FAVORABLE TO PALESTINIANS. SEVERAL WEST BANKERS HAVE SAID TO US THEY ASSUMED A SECOND EGYPTIAN STAGE WOULD BE NEXT. ONE ADDED HE THOUGHT HIS COMPATRIOTS CONSIDERED THEY STOOD BETTER CHANCE OF GETTING A GOOD DEAL IF THEIR ISSUES WERE DEALT WITH AFTER FINAL EGYPTIAN AND SYRIAN AGREEMENTS REACHED.

3. SOME OF MORE POLITICALLY ACTIVE ARABS REALIZE THAT WHEN WEST BANK'S TURN COMES PALESTINIAN REPRESENTATION ISSUE WILL BE RAISED IN DECISIVE WAY. EL QUDS MAY 19 EDITORIAL WENT ON TO STRESS NEED FOR PALESTINIAN PARTICIPATION IN ANY TALKS. WITH HUSSEIN BACK IN THE GAME, THERE IS APPRECIATION THAT PLO WILL HAVE TO PULL ITSELF TOGETHER AND MOVE DEFINITELY ONTO GENEVA TRACK IF IT IS IN FACT TO HAVE ANY CHANCE OF REPRESENTING PALESTINIANS. PLO SUMMIT MEETINGS REPORTED RECENTLY IN BEIRUT WERE WATCHED FOR INDICATIONS. PRO-HASHEMITE ANWAR KHATIB WAS GRATIFIED THAT NEWS OUT OF BEIRUT HAD PLO REJECTING GENEVA, RESOLUTION 252 AND SEPARATE WEST BANK/GAZA STATE CONCEPT. HE SAW THIS AS LEAVING HUSSDLN AS ONLY ARAB PLAYER ON THE FIELD. HIKMAT EL MASRI AND OTHER NABULSIS, ON OTHER HAND (PLO/SADAT ORIENTED), WERE OPTIMISTIC PLO WOULD TAKE CONSTRUCTIVE POSITION AS SOON AS SYRIAN-ISRAELI DISENGAGEMENT BECAME REALITY.¹ 5#3Y LOOKED TO JUNE 1 CAIRO PNC MEETING AS VEHICLE. MASRI CONCEDED DISARRAY ON ARAB SIDE OVER PALESTINIAN ISSUE AND SAID ARABS WOULD HAVE TO MEET AT SUMMIT AND WORK IT OUT DEFINITELY BEFORE NEGOTIATIONS COULD TAKE PLACE ABOUT WEST BANK.

4. PROMINENT PRO-PLO DOCTOR IBRAHIM TLEEL (RECENTLY THREATENED BY ISRAELI WITH EXPULSION FOR PUBLIC SUPPORT OF PLO REPRESENTATION) TOLD US, HOWEVER, HE BELIEVED PALESTINIAN ORGANIZATIONS WOULD NOT NEGOTIATE FOR WEST BANK. TO SIGN ANY SUCH AGREEMENT WOULD INVOLVE RECOGNITION OF ISRAEL, WHICH THEY COULD NOT DO. HE AGREED RELUCTANTLY THAT IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES HUSSEIN WAS ONLY AVAILABLE NEGOTIATOR. SINCE FIRST PRIORITY WAS GETTING RID OF ISRAELI OCCUPATION, WEST BANKERS WOULD ACCEPT HIS REPRESENTATION.

5. COMMENT: IF PLO PERSISTS IN REJECTING NEGOTIATIONS AND LEAVES THE FIELD TO HUSSEIN, THE REPRESENTATION ISSUED FOR THE TERRITORIAL ASPECT OF THE NEGOTIATIONS IS UNCONTESTED. INWHAT SEEMS TO BE THE UNLIKELY EVENT THE PLO SWITCHES TO A GENEVA COURSE, MASRI IS PROBABLY RIGHT THAT THE ARAB ESTABLISHMENT WILL HAVE TO MAKE A DEFINITIVE DECISION ON HOW THEIR SIDE CONDUCTS NEGOTIATIONS
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(IT MAY ALREADY HAVE DONE SO, BUT THE SIGNALS ARE AMBIGUOUS TO SAY THE LEAST.) IF HUSSEIN CARRIES THE BALL, THE WEST BANK WILL HOPE WITH SKEPTICISM THAT THE OUTCOME WILL PROVIDE FOR SOME AUTONOMY. THEY WILL HAVE GOING FOR THEM A POINT MADE TO US BY A KNOWLEDGEABLE PRAELI (SEPTTEL), THAT IN A DE-MILITARIZED WEST BANK, THE JORDANIANS WILL HAVE TO ALLOW THE LOCAL POPULATION ESSENTIALLY TO RULE ITSELF. NO ONE SEEMS TO TAKE VERY SERIOUSLY HUSSEIN'S PROPOSAL THAT THE PLO NEGOTIATE, AT SOME SUBSEQUENT STAGE PRESUMABLY,

" PALESTINIAN RIGHTS."

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PARAMILITARY FORCES, PALESTINIANS, SELFGOVERNMENT, MILITARY OCCUPIED AREAS, PUBLIC ATTITUDES, PEACE TALKS, MEETING DELEGATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 20 MAY 1974
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GarlanWA
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974JERUSA00994
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740125-0386
From: JERUSALEM
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740534/aaaabeba.tel
Line Count: 117
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Reference: JERUSALEM 474
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GarlanWA
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 19 JUN 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <19 JUN 2002 by cunninfx>; APPROVED <26 FEB 2003 by GarlanWA>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PALESTINIAN REPRESENTATION: CURRENT WEST BANK ATTITUDES
TAGS: PFOR, PINT, JO, IS, PLO
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005